



CONNECTOR

JOY ZABALA, EDITOR

DECEMBER 2007

President's Message

Dr. Brenda Heiman

This has been an important and exciting year for TAM. It has been my privilege to serve as your TAM president this year, and it is simply amazing that the year has gone by so quickly! As it draws to a close, I would like to review some of the accomplishments of TAM this year in meeting its goal of becoming the premier organization for both information and leadership in the field of technology for persons with disabilities.

The TAM Executive Board updated and revised the Constitution and Bylaws this year, helping to better align TAM with CEC and other CEC Divisions, as well as with other professional organizations. This year TAM has completely overhauled its website in order to offer our members easier access to information and products. The TAM website—www.tamcec.org—is scheduled to go live at the beginning of January 2008, just in time for TAM's 25th anniversary! The *Journal of Special Education Technology (JSET)* will be available on our website, as well as current legislative information and alerts that are vital to the membership. The new website also will afford us the ability to conduct online elections.

TAM published three new Technology in Action issues this year. These include *Creating a Climate for Learning: Assistive Technology and Classroom Management*, *Improving Basic Mathematics Instruction: Promising Technology Resources for Students with Special Needs*, and *The Software √-List: Evaluating Educational Software for Use by Students with Disabilities* (which is included with this mailing). These, along with four issues of the TAM Connector newsletter, were sent to you as a part of your membership benefits. Two TAM "Technology Fans" were published:

- *AT Considerations for Academic Success is a sampling of AT devices to help students succeed.*
- *Using AT Accommodations in Assessments* provides implementation strategies to assist students in participating in both classroom and district-wide assessments.

Additionally, TAM published one monograph this year, *Technology Integration—Improving Access to the Curriculum for Students with Disabilities*.

In this issue you will find a copy of an article, "Technologies for Self-Determination for Youth with Developmental Disabilities," published by the Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD) in their professional journal, *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*

(continued on page 4)

What's Inside...

| | |
|--|---|
| President's Message..... | 1 |
| 2008 TAM Officers..... | 1 |
| Using TAM Products for Teacher Preparation..... | 2 |
| CAN Report..... | 3 |
| Online Learning Opportunities | 4 |

Your 2008 TAM Officers

President: Tara Jeffs
President Elect: Betty Nelson
Vice-President: Deborah Newton
Immediate Past President: Brenda Heiman
Secretary: Donna Tilley-Gregory
Treasurer: Cheryl Wissick
Members-at-Large: Diane Painter and Elizabeth Lahm

Visit the TAM website (at www.tamcec.org) for information about how to contact your officers. They are always happy to hear your thoughts and suggestions about how TAM can best be of service to you.

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA DIVISION



TAM Products in Action!

Using TAM Products in Teacher Preparation Programs

Diane D. Painter

Program Director, Curriculum and Instruction, Hood College

Instructional Planning for Students with Diverse Learning Needs

Hood College in Frederick, Maryland offers undergraduate programs leading to teacher certification and graduate education programs for practicing P-12 educators. A variety of TAM products are used to support learning in several courses, including undergraduate courses in the early childhood, dual certification (elementary and special education) programs, and classes in the M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction Program designed to meet two of the Maryland Technology Standards:

- Standard V. Integrating Technology into Curriculum and Instruction.
- Standard VI. Assistive Technology.

Although TAM products are used in many courses, this article provides an example of how they are used in one course, Special Education Methods in the Elementary School.

The focus of Special Education Methods in the Elementary School is learning about and understanding theories of language learning and how these theories can be used to develop and adapt instruction so that students with special needs develop effective reading, written language and mathematics skills. In this course, students analyze case studies in which they have the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of legal requirements, ethical practices, diversity issues and their impact on the school environment as a whole. After reading Chapters 1 and 2 of the TAM monograph, *Considering the Need for Assistive Technology within the IEP*, to learn about how IDEA 2004 addresses assistive technology, students identify

issues in case studies and make recommendations. After reading Chapter 3 to help them understand how functional areas may be supported through the use of assistive technology, students visit the Hood College computer lab and explore a wide variety of technologies that can be used to meet the learning needs of exceptional learners. Using the SETT Framework developed by TAM Member, Joy Zabala—which forms the foundation for the TAM Technology Fans—students in the course develop a plan that includes the appropriate use of assistive technology with a particular group of students who have special needs in a general education classroom.

During the development their plans, students read chapters in the TAM monograph, *Technology Integration*, that align to the subject matter that the plan includes. The *TAM Quick Wheel*, the *Assistive Technology Planner for Teachers*, and TAM Technology Fans are used as resources to assist in matching learning needs to specific types of products, integrating those products into instruction, and evaluating the effectiveness of technology-supported instruction.

TAM products have been useful resources for students in both the undergraduate and graduate education programs at Hood College. Evaluations and reflections of students indicate they have been able to pass along what they have learned in their courses to others by demonstrating assistive technology products to mentor teachers, by providing technology in-services to staff members, and by developing shared unit plans with team members. What better resources to use in such activities than TAM products that provide educators with information about how technology can be used to support student learning?

TAM Resources Cited in this Article

Check out these products in the TAM Products catalogue (found in this mailing) or on the TAM website at www.tamcec.org.

Bausch, M., Alt, M., Hasselbring, T. (2006). *Assistive technology planner: From IEP consideration to classroom implementation*. Lexington, KY: National Assistive Technology Research Institute. [Distributed by TAM]

Castellani, J., Reed, P., Zabala, J., McPherson, S., & Rein, J. (2005). *Considering the need for assistive technology within the individualized education program*. Arlington, VA: TAM.

Jeffer, T., Reed, P., & Warger, C. (2007). *TAM technology fan: Assistive technology considerations for academic success*. Arlington, VA: TAM.

Mistrett, S., Ruffino, A., Lane, S., Robinson, L., Reed, P., & Milbourne, S. (2006). *TAM technology fan: Supports for young children*. Arlington, VA: TAM.

Reed, P., Warger, C., Jeffer, T., & Walser, P. (2007). *TAM technology fan: Using assistive technology accommodations in assessments*. Arlington, VA: TAM.

TAM. (no date). *Assistive technology consideration quick wheel*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Warger, C. L. (Ed.). (2007). *Technology integration: Improving access to the curriculum for students with disabilities*. Arlington, VA: TAM.

Editor's Note: We are looking for individuals to share how they have used TAM products in professional development activities in upcoming TAM Connector columns. Please contact Joy Zabala (jjabala@cast.org) if you would like to be featured in an upcoming issue.

CAN Report

Politics Slows Down Congressional Activity in Washington

Joel Mittler, Ed. D., CAN Coordinator

While most of us are toiling away in schools, universities, agencies, or elsewhere, Washington continues to get bogged down in politics. So it is with the appropriations process and with reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). While appropriations may be settled by the time that you read this, action on NCLB appears to be stalled, at least for now.

NCLB legislation has been under consideration for many months. It appears, however, that both the House and the Senate, despite promises to bring bills to the floor during the fall, have been unable to do so. NCLB has had many concerned parties, including CEC, voice their opinions about reauthorization over the past year. While it may seem that Democratically controlled committees in both houses should be able to agree on a reauthorization, such an agreement is not that simple to obtain. After all, there are strong differences even among the major advocacy groups as to the necessary changes. In addition, any changes need to be negotiated with both the President and the Republican minority, especially in the Senate where legislative rules give the minority party powers to slow down or stop legislation they do not support. You may recall the reauthorization of IDEA that led to the 1997 version. It was held up for over three years while all the parties worked out their differences. In any event, while both the House and Senate leaders have pushed off NCLB reauthorization until next year, the Congressional elections of 2008 and the Presidential election may make any Congressional action impossible to achieve until a new President is elected. After all, the candidates will likely take differing positions about

NCLB, making agreement in the Congress difficult to achieve. Stay tuned!

The annual appropriations process also got stymied by politics. The process starts in February when the President issues his budget request for the next fiscal year (FY), beginning the following October 1. The Senate and the House each assign subcommittees to evaluate the request and make their own recommendations. Ultimately, the Senate and the House each pass appropriation bills. When there are differences between the two bills of each body, a Conference Committee is needed to work out the differences. The final agreed upon bill is sent to the President for his signature. All of this needs to be accomplished by October 1, when the new fiscal year is scheduled to begin. So it was this year when the conference for the bill containing education funding for fiscal year 2008 was finalized and sent to the President in late October. Unfortunately, a few days later, the President vetoed that bill.

As we go to press, we are awaiting for either a Congressional override of the veto (unlikely) or a negotiated settlement with the President. While the President's initial budget request called for a very small increase in IDEA school aged funding, actually lowering the federal share below 17%, the bill that was sent to him includes a modest increase, raising that share to 17.7%, still far from the promised 40%. Other IDEA funding, Javits funding for the gifted, and special education research funding were either set at the same levels as last year or received slight increases. Technology and Media Services received a very small \$1.6 million increase. While the gov-

ernment keeps on running at last year's levels through passage of a "Continuing Resolution", it is hard to know how or when the actual appropriations for FY 2008 will actually be completed or at what levels.

In both these areas, CEC remains actively involved, often with other advocacy groups as allies. They issue weekly updates, occasionally ask for letters to be sent to members of Congress, and respond to requests from The Department of Education when needed. If you wish to receive weekly updates from CEC or have any other questions, feel free to contact me at jmittler@liu.edu.

TAM Hosts Poster Sessions at ATIA 2008

For the past several years, TAM has been an active partner in the educational program at the annual conference of the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA). At this year's conference—which will be held in Orlando, Florida, from January 31 through February 2, 2008—TAM will play an enhanced role. In addition to chairing the Research and Professional Development strand of the conference, this year TAM will host the first-ever display of poster sessions. Be sure to visit the poster session area to visit with fellow TAM members, see what's new, and take advantage of the opportunity to spend time sharing ideas with the presenters. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

President's Message

(continued from p. 1)

ties (ETDD). The TAM Executive Board voted to provide a copy of the article to each TAM member, and believes that the paper, which focuses on "technologies for voice," is a significant benchmark in understanding the importance of technology integration in the lives of students with disabilities. I would like to thank Polly Parish, President of DDD, and Stan Zucker, ETDD Editor, for working closely with TAM to make this important contribution to the field available to TAM members.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support for TAM. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to work with such a dedicated and supportive Executive Board; they made this job easy for me, and consistently worked to further the goals of TAM. I can also assure you that TAM will be in good hands in the upcoming year. The leadership skills of the incoming Executive Board will ensure that the progress will continue. Thanks again for a great year!

Online Learning Opportunities in Assistive Technology

People across the country involved in the development and delivery of assistive technology services to students with disabilities are seeking opportunities to add to their skills and gain credentials that include assistive technology. TAM is committed to helping people locate online or hybrid programs that provide learning opportunities across the barriers of time and place. If you have a program or know of a program that should be featured in a future edition of the *TAM Connector*, please send an email to Joy Zabala at jzabala@cast.org.

TAM *CONNECTOR*

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